

1809, and the first landing of settlers in 1812. These are some of the several fascinating aspects of *A Life*, as well as the many aspects depicted in the book that revolve around, or are connected to, the clash in June 1816 between the settlers and the Métis that took place at Seven Oaks, just north of the Assiniboine River on the west side of the Red River.

After the incident at Seven Oaks, Selkirk got what he wished for: a Commission of Inquiry mandated by the Imperial government. The commission was chaired by William Coltman. In the report, delivered to the Imperial government in 1818, Coltman described the reason the NWC had a powerful presence in British North America, despite not enjoying any legal right to being on Rupert's Land, "but arising from a junction of Capital and connection which has hitherto enabled them to overwhelm all Competition" (p. 58).

The "capital and connections" that empowered the NWC come into view when Bumsted turns to Lord Selkirk's relationship with the courts of Upper and Lower Canada (pp. 359–397). It is clear that Selkirk's treatment by the courts in British North America was filled with procedural and evidentiary curiosities that did not come into being without interventions by powerful sources. Corporate anger and indignation as embodied by the NWC at the time proved a very powerful source. The final evolution in the HBC-NWC relationship was the takeover and amalgamation of the two rivals by the HBC, although many commentators, both contemporary and modern, have twisted themselves in knots trying to describe this final evolution in all kinds of other ways. The outcome was that the HBC survived, and the NWC disappeared as a corporate entity.

It was Andrew Wedderburn (changed to "Colville," thanks to a peerage) who came up with the scheme to change the fur trade in British North America, eliminating the NWC. Colville was also an executor of Selkirk's estate, for Selkirk died on April 8, 1820. Colville orchestrated the takeover of the NWC and introduced a new business scheme for the fur trade. Moreover, Colville put in place its next grand character, George Simpson, who was made governor of the HBC in North America, while Colville became governor of the HBC. These historical outcomes can be seen in fascinating and evolving detail in Bumsted's outstanding historical biography of Selkirk.

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CALICHMAN, Richard (ed.) — *Overcoming Modernity: Cultural Identity in Wartime Japan*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008. Pp. 227.

Since the rise of post-colonialism and the critique of Eurocentrism in the 1990s, scholars have increasingly questioned the significance of European modernity. A recent example of this trend is Dipesh Chakrabarty's well-received book *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), which criticizes Eurocentric

visions of the world. However, scholars often overlook that in 1942, in the midst of World War II, a group of Japanese intellectuals from different backgrounds organized a symposium that anticipated contemporary discussions about modernity. The symposium was entitled “Overcoming Modernity” (*kindai no chōkoku*) and is now available in this well-crafted translation by Richard Calichman. In addition to a translation of the text, Calichman provides readers with an interpretive introduction, in which he develops a philosophical critique of the various participants’ attempts to theorize how to overcome modernity.

As Calichman explains, the symposium was attended by three different groups of intellectuals: the Kyoto School philosophers, such as Nishitani Keiji; members of the Romantic School (*nihon rōman ha*), such as Hayashi Fusao; and members of the Literary World Group, such as Kobayashi Hideo. Intellectuals from these different factions specialized in various areas including philosophy, literature, music, and physics. Calichman has translated all of the twelve short symposium statements, along with the two round-table discussions at the end of the symposium. Reading the various statements in the volume, one is struck by the breadth of the topics covered, from film, philosophy, music, theology, and even extending to science. However, the writings coalesce around a concern about what was happening to Japan as it confronted European modernity. The above formulation resembles a question that Asian scholars and officials pose even today, namely, can Asian countries remain themselves and at the same time be modern?

In his introduction to this volume, Calichman argues that one must understand the various statements in the symposium from a philosophical perspective, which can grasp how the various participants attempted to affirm Japanese identity while overlooking the philosophical conditions that make identity possible. In short, Calichman claims that most of the participants were worried that Japanese identity was being contaminated by Western modernity, and thus they sought some type of return to a pure Japanese essence or identity. We can see this in Hayashi Fusao’s imperative, “Japanese literature, return to your true nature!” (p. 110).

Drawing on Jacques Derrida, Calichman contends that the participants of the symposium did not realize that identity is always already contaminated by the Other, and thus pure identity is an oxymoron. Moreover, in Calichman’s view, because this contamination does not happen in time, we must understand this logic of identity and contamination by means of philosophical reflection and not through historical analysis. In other words, it is not the case that Japanese identity was pure at one point and then became contaminated after contact with Western modernity.

One of the great strengths of this volume is that, after developing his interpretation of the symposium in the introduction, Calichman lets the texts of the symposium speak for themselves so that readers may develop alternative interpretations. I would like to suggest one such alternative. As the subtitle of Calichman’s translation indicates, the symposium occurred in the midst of World War II, and thus participants often argued about culture as part of a larger project to legitimize the Japanese colonial enterprise and Japan’s role in the war. Calichman mentions the war but does not amply stress that, when

participants developed ideologies supporting the war, they were not only concerned about identity, but they also envisioned a type of world-historical transformation. I will cite just one example from the symposium to make my point. In the final statement of the symposium, Suzuki Shigetaka's "A Note on 'Overcoming Modernity'," Suzuki makes the following comments:

[T]his issue of overcoming modernity must in a sense be seen as related to us, since European civilization has today already become deeply internalized within our country and is no longer merely an alien civilization but actually now a part of us. In other words, the modernity that is to be overcome exists not only in Europe but indeed within us as well. Above all, to the extent that the European civilization that has been incorporated within our country is one of capitalism, individualism, and liberalism, that it is in other words part of a nineteenth-century civilization that has now reached what Europeans regard as a stage of decline in need of reexamination and liquidation, then this problem necessarily demands the keenest reflection on our part. (p. 146)

These remarks suggest that we must understand the context of the symposium and the discourses of the various participants in terms of the trajectory of global capitalist modernity. Notice that Suzuki discusses the degeneration of nineteenth-century civilization, which in many ways corresponds to the decline of liberal capitalism and the emergence of a new state-centric form, also known as the fordist form of capitalism. Hence, I would suggest that the quest for identity expressed in this symposium was intimately linked to a larger project of overcoming capitalist modernity, which some participants (mis)understood as nineteenth-century civilization.

On this point, two works would serve as important supplements to this volume of translations: Hiromatsu Wataru's *Kindai no chōkoku ron* (On "Overcoming Modernity") (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1989) and Harry Harootunian's *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton University Press, 2000). Both of these works discuss the relationship between the development of monopoly capitalism in East Asia and Japanese anti-modern discourses during the interwar years. As its title adumbrates, Harootunian's book stresses the ironic transformation of activity (overcoming) into passivity (being overcome by) in the interwar project of transcending or transforming modernity. The participants attempted to enter history as agents and overcome "nineteenth-century civilization" at a time when capitalism was itself transforming from a liberal to a fordist form. Despite their intentions and their understanding of their actions, the participants inevitably used anti-modern, anti-capitalist rhetoric to create a fascist form of fordist capitalist modernity. Hence, although they positioned themselves against modernity, there is a point at which their actions contributed precisely to the historical trajectory of capitalist modernity — they were, in a word, overcome by modernity. This argument is of extreme contemporary relevance because, in both popular movements and academic trends, we see a resurgence of anti-modern anti-Eurocentric tendencies that fail to understand

the conditions of possibility of both their critique and the object of their critique in the transformations of global capitalism.

Given the continued significance of the themes discussed in the symposium, Calichman has done an enormous service by making the statements of participants available to a wider audience. The book is not only essential reading for scholars of Japanese intellectual and political history, but also of interest to anyone concerned with the crisis of modernity and various reactions to it.

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CAVALLO, Sandra — *Artisans of the Body in Early Modern Italy: Identities, Families, and Masculinities*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007. Pp. 281.

Sandra Cavallo's fine monograph about seventeenth- and eighteenth-century barber surgeons in Turin, Italy, delivers rich lessons for historians of many interests. With its broad social and cultural compass, the book represents a "new" history of medicine. At the same time, the author boldly takes on several truisms dear to social and economic historians and complicates them with much original insight. Incorporating nuanced ideas about kinship, life cycles, and informal networks, she lays out a lucid picture of overlooked dimensions of an early modern artisan world. Although dense with archival detail and attentive to Italian particularities, Cavallo's vision has broader ramifications. Her comparisons on many points with other parts of Europe enhance this wider relevance. Furthermore, Cavallo infuses these social and professional themes with fresh attention to culture and gender, especially masculine identities.

The book's title posits a novel way to conceptualize early modern occupational collectivity. *Artisans of the Body* were men who practised a variety of, to us moderns, unrelated trades, from surgeons and barbers to wigmakers, tailors, jewellers, and upholsterers. For Cavallo, the Turin surgeons belonged less to a hierarchy of medical professionals than to a horizontal grouping of artisanship occupations that shared a dedication to the care of the bodily health, hygiene, comfort, and beauty of their clientele. To the early modern mind, the inner and the outer person, the healthy parts and the imperfect ones, were best tended together. As Cavallo shows, these allied artisans fashioned extensive social and professional ties — among trades, within neighbourhoods, through marriage, and across generations. Yet, in her view, neither conventional patrilineal families, nor institutions like guilds or licensing colleges, but instead informally mediated cultural affinities created and sustained these critical occupational networks.

According to the introduction, a succinct rendering of the book's central insights and methods, the initial project was to put the much-neglected surgeons back into the story of medical practice. Concerning the pre-modern world, the medical historiography distinguishes book-learned physicians, who cognitively